

Ways to End Consumerism

Proofs of consumerism's threat to sustainability are as ubiquitous as modern advertisements. As deeply rooted in our society as it seems, it is still not a natural way of society. Some historians actually believe that it is the consequence of a series of historical events. One of the explanations points to the [declining influence](#) of social order making the rich and powerful felt a lacking sense of identity, despite their race, class, and gender. Thus, they thought possessing more things ought to evince their social status. Further, their awareness of vulnerability, dependence, lack of pregiven meanings of life led to their desire to dominate. Since the rich already had the money to allow for more entrepreneurial endeavors, they ultimately garnered themselves an unfair amount of control over the masses. Secondly, consumerism undermines critical thinking skills. The education system has degraded to a place to prepare students for the consumerist lifestyle by [embedding market values](#). For example, students are taught to just [purchase](#) the simple, little things they need, rather than wasting the time to make their own. This small problem fits into a much [bigger picture](#). Students do not question what the "experts" say any more. They do not stop and think about why do the "experts" get to voice their opinions over the students themselves. Consumerism also undermines the possibility of collective action in the political world because people lack a [sense of agency](#). Studies show that people foremost think of themselves as individuals, not a member of a collective group to keep the government in check.

A few potential ways to end consumerism I found can be grouped into two main categories: embodied reflection and education. The first concept, [embodied reflection](#), concerns a specific kind of reflection that includes yourself in the reflection process, instead of an observer. This process encourages us to confront ourselves and see how our corporation perpetuates consumerism. Along the same lines, the author of Mediumism, Rene Arcilla, claims that mediumist art helps grasp the concept of [strangerhood](#)—a gap between our consciousness and ourselves. In another words, what you perceived does not match what something is in reality. Ultimately, embodied reflection urges us to build more concrete relationships with ourselves, better understand the way our minds work, and nurture our ability to critically intervene naturalized reality.

The second category of solutions emphasizes education from different aspects. In order to raise the next generation as anti-consumerists, it is crucial to raise awareness of consumerism in child education so that sustainability is deeply rooted in their way of thinking. Critical media literacy is also another important skill that enables people to selectively believe in what they hear from mainstream media, which helps o stay away from consumerist traps like planned obsolescence. Similarly, Martha Nussbaum suggest that arts and humanities should be reintroduced to curriculums to help broaden bodies of knowledge, as well as develop critical thinking and narrative imagination skills. The next big concept revolves education on pluralism. People must learn that they do no live by themselves in this world. Through a better [democratic](#)

[citizenship education](#), people will come to realize their responsibilities as members of a polity and the importance of collective action in politics.

—533 Words—

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